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ABSTRACT

This Policy Brief consists of a report on the status of minority teachers in the United States, with emphasis on the states served by the North Central Regional Educational Laboratory. The first article examines the causes of the decline of minority group teachers and the impact of this shortage on minority students. It lists some of the strategies that have been implemented or proposed to address the problem (early identification of students interested in teaching, magnet school programs, improved guidance in high schools, efforts to present teachers and teaching in a positive light, scholarships and loan forgiveness programs, support structures for minority college students, employment guarantees, support for collaboration between historically Black colleges and research universities, preservice programs that will give students preparation and experience in urban schools, and networking). Regional action and agendas are outlined for the states of Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Michigan, Minnesota, Ohio, and Wisconsin. A commentary is presented on new strategies which are being developed for producing more minority teachers. A second commentary describes a plan for the recruitment and retention of minority teachers in Milwaukee. References and resources are included. (JD)

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Policy Briefs

Number 8 • 1990

A Publication of the North Central Regional Educational Laboratory

Recruiting and Retaining Minority Teachers

A National Perspective

by Arthur Dorman, NCREL

Policy Briefs are reports on the status of current issues in education from a national perspective, descriptions of actions and agendas in the NCREL region, commentaries by experts from their particular point of view, and resources for further information.

America faces a serious shortage of minority teachers. Our nation's minority student population is quickly growing, while the number of minority teachers continues to shrink. In 1980, one U.S. teacher in eight was a member of a minority group. Without intervention, that proportion will drop to one in twenty by the turn of the century. At one time, 18 percent of the U.S. teaching force was made up of black teachers. Today, fewer than seven percent of teachers are black, and that number is projected to fall to less than five percent by 1995. More than nine percent of our students but less than two percent of our teaching force is Hispanic. Overall, one-third of our school children will be members of minority groups by the end of the century. In 1985, 23 of the 25 largest cities in the U.S. had minority enrollments of over 50 percent. California, New Mexico, and Mississippi already have over 50 percent minority enrollments in their public schools. A string of evidence and projections confirm the view that the imbalance between minority teachers and students will continue to worsen unless considerable interventions occur.

What impact might this shortage of minority teachers have on students? Minority teachers serve as important role models for minority youngsters and provide evidence that America's heritage and opportunities are intended to benefit all citizens. As expressed by the National Education Association's past president Mary Hatwood Futrell, "We're cheating minority students of the positive role models they need, role models who can bolster their pride and self esteem." (*NEA Today*, June 1989). The issue is important for non-minority students as well. The report of the Task Force on Teaching as a Profession (1986) stated: "Schools form children's opinions about the larger society and their own futures. The race and background of their teachers tells them something about authority and power in contemporary America. These messages influence children's attitudes toward school, their academic accomplishments, and their own and others' intrinsic worth. The views they form in school about justice and fairness also influence their future citizenship." Without exposure to minority teachers, both minority and majority students will be left with the impression that teaching and academic enterprises in general are pursuits better suited to whites (Loehr, 1988).

The diminished ranks of minority teachers represents a decline at two ports of entry: smaller numbers of minority high school graduates have been going to college, and of minority students in college, fewer are selecting teacher education programs. Reasons cited for the decline in minority student participation in higher education include lack of role models, inadequate preparation and information about opportunities, the use of test scores that may be racially biased to determine college admissions, rising college tuition coupled with reductions in financial assistance, and a rechanneling of assistance from grants to loans.

In addition, fewer minority students enrolled in colleges complete their program of study than do non-minorities. Deficiencies in the secondary school programs, lack of support in the college environment, economic hardship, increasing overt racism among students on college campuses, and the absence of minority faculty and other mentor figures have been cited as contributors to this problem.

Fewer minority college students enter teacher education than in the past. This is in large part a measure of the success minorities have had in breaking down barriers to other fields of endeavor. No longer is education one of the primary professions open to minorities. In 1966, education was the most popular major for black college students, chosen by

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23 percent. By 1978, only 6.8 percent of black college students were education majors. Education now competes with such fields as law, business, medicine, and engineering for new minority practitioners. In terms of salary, working conditions, and status, education faces a great disadvantage against other lines of work. At an average of about $32,000, teacher salaries still lag behind many other fields. As for working conditions, Martin Haberman states the case aptly: "In urban schools (which is where most blacks and Hispanics attend school), it is unlikely that the most successful students would want to subject themselves to the conditions of work in which they have observed their own approximately 50 teachers and countless substitutes," (Haberman, 1989). At any rate, it may be imprudent to increase the number of minority teachers at the expense of minority engineers, doctors, or accountants. Rather, an overall increase of minorities in higher education would allow for increased proportionate participation in all fields, including teaching.

Another disincentive for choosing a teaching career is the teacher certification test required by most states. Many of these tests are suspect of being culturally biased, as minorities fail at much higher rates than non-minorities (Tanner and Segura, 1990). In some cases, the tests are being revised or have been withdrawn. Also, the reliability of these tests as predictors of future success in teaching has been seriously challenged (Zimpher and Howey, 1990). The tests, and the negative "press" generated by the high fail rates have contributed to a perception among minorities that education is an inhospitable field.

Minority group members who overcome the various obstacles and disincentives and become practicing teachers are more likely to leave teaching than are non-minority teachers. In a 1988 poll conducted by the Metropolitan Life Insurance Company, 41 percent of minority teachers, but only 25 percent of white teachers, said they were likely to leave teaching and enter another profession within five years. The same poll reports that minority teachers were far more likely than majority teachers to say that lack of resources, dropouts, teenage pregnancies, drugs, and violence were problems at their schools. It should be noted that 30 percent of minority but only 9 percent of majority teachers surveyed taught in inner city schools (reported in *Education Week*, October 5, 1988).

This problem is stunningly complex, and involves local school districts, teacher preparation programs, and state policies. Numerous strategies have been implemented or proposed to address the problem from one or more different vantage points including:

- Early identification of students in high school or junior high who may be interested in teaching, and nurturing that interest through programs such as Future Teachers of America, mentoring, experiences as an aide or tutor for younger students, summer programs on college campuses, and high school courses that introduce teaching as a profession
- Magnet school programs for students interested in teaching careers, with examples found in Los Angeles, Houston, and Washington, DC
- Improved guidance for minority high school students in college admissions and financial assistance
- Efforts to present teachers and teaching in the most positive light to minority students including information on recent increases in teacher salary, rewards, benefits, and professional status
- Scholarships and loan forgiveness programs for qualified minority students who enter teaching
- Support structures, when necessary, for minority college students including academic reinforcement, social support systems, and coaching to prepare for teacher certification examinations
- Employment guarantees, where a school district supports their graduates through a teacher preparation program, guaranteeing employment in the district upon completion
- Support for collaborations between historically black institutions of higher education and large research universities that have more varied resources to bring to bear on the problem
- Designing teacher preservice programs to give students meaningful preparation and practical experience in the realities of urban schools
- Networking and state or regional clearinghouses to link school districts and minority teachers
- Reconsideration of state teacher certification tests
- Higher education and/or school district support for new minority teachers during their induction year
- Recruitment of minority teachers from diverse settings, such as the armed forces, community colleges, mid-career changers, and paraprofessionals within school districts
- Improvement of the physical environment so that schools are safe and pleasant places of work
- Increased options for advancement and diversification within the teaching profession as incentives to increase retention
- Providing sufficient human and material resources to all teachers to enable them to experience the intrinsic satisfaction of seeing their students succeed

Comprehensive state policies and support for collaborative local district and higher education initiatives can greatly assist those wrestling with this serious issue. Increasing minority teachers has been a concern of national leaders as well. At the request of Secretary of Education Lauro F. Cavazos, the Council on Education established a group to work on the issue and draft proposals for action. U.S. Senator Edward M. Kennedy has introduced legislation that includes $35 million a year for school district, higher education, and state education agency programs that encourage minority group members to become teachers.

Pollster Lou Harris expressed the magnitude of the issue when he said, "Minority teachers would be the determining factor in whether minority students would be a drain on society... or make a positive contribution to society. It's possible that it is crucial to the entire country how this issue is settled." ❐

Arthur Dorman is a Program Associate at NCREL. He is co-director of NCREL's Teacher Incentives Research Program, coordinator of self-evaluation at NCREL and he directs the School Finance Study Project and the NCREL State Assessment Directors Network.

Regional Action and Agendas

Illinois

Enhancing the number of minorities in teaching is an explicit goal of the State Board of Education. While the present teaching force is 16 percent minority, only 11 percent of students preparing to be teachers are minorities.

Legislation

No new legislation is expected. Legislation last year will require all LEAs to develop and implement a minority recruitment plan for all staff.

Future

It is expected that Illinois will require teacher education institutions to have a minority recruitment plan in place.

For more information please contact:
Illinois State Board of Education
100 North First Street, S-306
Springfield, IL 62777
Susan K. Bentz
217/782-3774

Indiana

The recruitment and retention of minority teachers is a high priority in Indiana.

Legislation

The Student Exploratory Teaching Project (Project SET) is funded for the 1989-91 biennium. The funding is as follows: 1989-90 and 1990-91 funded for $93,881. There are no carry-over provisions. The program is designed to encourage exceptional secondary and post-secondary students to enter the teaching profession. Particular emphasis is placed on the recruitment of minority male and physically handicapped students, although not to the exclusion of other students. There are 54 schools participating. Student participation has increased from 140 to 1,080.

The Minority Teacher Scholarship Program (1991-93) was created by the 1988 Indiana General Assembly to address the critical shortage of black and Hispanic teachers in Indiana. Scholarships were awarded for the first time for the 1988-89 academic year.

The program is administered by the State Student Assistance Commission of Indiana (SSACI) that is responsible for keeping all master records and allotting funds to colleges and universities. For the purpose of this program, minority is defined as black or Hispanic. The program is established to encourage and promote qualified minority individuals to pursue a career in teaching in accredited schools in Indiana, and to enhance the number of individuals who may serve as role models for minority students in Indiana.

Future

Continued support of Project SET and the Minority Teacher Scholarship Program is expected.

For more information please contact:
Indiana Department of Education
State House, Room 229
Indianapolis, IN 46204-2798
Dallas Daniels, Jr.
317/232-0550

Iowa

Iowa has done initial data collection and needs assessment which recognizes that significant disparities exist between actual and desired representation of minorities and women in educational staffing patterns in teaching and educational administration. This has generated both legislative and organizational efforts that are beginning to offer some remedies for the current situation.

Legislation

During the last two years, special appropriations have been provided for financial assistance and special programs to recruit and retain minority students into higher education. A statewide task force is also working to promote the advancement of women and minorities into administrative positions. Special grants have been provided for school districts and community colleges establishing recruitment programs for minority staff. A statewide affirmative action law is being implemented this year. Future legislation is expected to continue along these lines.

Future

Current efforts are expected to continue and expand. The implementation of statewide affirmative action planning and reporting is expected to continue along these lines.

For more information please contact:
Iowa Department of Education
Grimes State Office Building
Des Moines, IA 50319
Ted Stilwill
515/281-3333

Michigan

The State Board of Education has adopted and implemented an Urban Teacher Education Program designed to prepare students to teach in culturally diverse schools. A component of the program focuses on the recruitment and graduation of minority students in classroom teaching.

Legislation

The Michigan Legislature has appropriated some $500,000 over the last two years to support this program. The Urban Teacher Education Program targets the area of the state with the highest minority population (Wayne County, Detroit). Wayne State University, Eastern Michigan University, and Wayne County Community College are the educational institutions responsible for the initial planning and implementation.

Because of the critical need, community college students are recruited along with regularly enrolled students, and moved through an academic system that allows "in classroom" experience during the junior year. As the senior year is in progress, "teacher candidates" will be assigned to supervised, paid internships.

Future

Once this model begins to show the expected results, recommendations will be made to expand the program to include other universities and community colleges

in the higher education system.

The State Board of Education has also supported the development of the Young Educator's Society (YES) program. This program focuses on attracting students to teaching careers. The YES program operates in secondary schools down to grade seven.

For more information please contact:
Michigan Department of Education
Office of Minority Equity
608 W. Allegan
P.O. Box 30008
Lansing, MI 48909
Earl Nelson or
C. Danford Austin
517/334-6275

Minnesota

Working cooperatively with the Minnesota Board of Teaching, the Education Commission of the States (ECS) is working with Minnesota (one of five states: Arizona, Iowa, New York and North Carolina) in gathering information relative to the attraction and retention of minority students in the teaching profession. Using these states as pilots, ECS has gathered quantitative information to identify the key points in the delivery of education (K-12 and higher education) at which policy and program might be used to increase the supply of teachers generally and the supply of minority teachers particularly.

The Minnesota Board of Teaching and the Minnesota Board of Education appointed a joint committee to develop plans to increase state activity addressing the recruitment, preparation, and retention of minority teachers in Minnesota schools. The results of the ECS report will be used as the launching point for Board of Teaching and Board of Education activity. The committee is working to address the following recommendations received from a 1988-89 State Department Advisory Committee and to establish a commission to:

1. Provide quarterly reports to the Board on its recommendations to recruit, prepare, hire, and retain persons of color for Minnesota schools;
2. Secure support funding, being charged to set quantitative as well as qualitative goals;
3. Serve as advisor to the Board of Teaching and Board of Education in setting 1990-2000 as a Decade of Promise and to provide the means and results for change in minority staffing in Minnesota schools; and
4. Address specific staffing needs of school systems with significantly increasing enrollments of students of color, and staff needs as occasioned by school/district desegregation.

For more information please contact:
Minnesota Department of Education
Capitol Square Building
550 Cedar Street
St. Paul, MN 55101
Richard Simms
612/296-7644

Ohio

The Ohio Department of Education and the State Personnel Administrators Association jointly sponsor a minority recruitment fair. All teacher training institutions encourage their minority teacher candidates to participate in the fair. All school districts seeking minority candidates participate by sending a representative to interview prospective teachers. Most of the teaching candidates are offered jobs by the end of the fair which lasts two days.

Because the pool of applicants is shrinking and the demand for minority applicants is increasing, Ohio has not been able to meet the needs in recent years. Many of the larger school districts, such as Dayton and Cincinnati, have entered into agreements with area colleges and universities to train their own pool of minority teachers. Minority high school students are encouraged to enter the teaching profession. If they do choose teaching, financial assistance is provided to the student. After graduation from a teacher-training institution, the student must commit five years of service to the school district.

For more information please contact:
Ohio Department of Education
65 South Front Street
Columbus, OH 43266-0334
Margaret Trent
614/644-7056

Wisconsin

The University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee has an aide certfication program to increase the number of minority and culturally diverse teachers in their schools. The Wisconsin University System has a $100,000 scholarship program. The "Teacher World Program" is designed to attract high school minority students into teaching. The "Future Teachers of America" (FTA) program has been reinstated with a special emphasis on minority students.

Legislation

A position in the Department of Public Instruction was funded by the legislature to work with the "Beginning Teacher Program" that has a special emphasis on recruiting minority teachers. The minority scholarship program was funded by the legislature for $100,000. Every institution in the state must have minority recruitment as part of the "Program Approval Standards."

Future

The state will continue its efforts in the recruitment and retention of minority and culturally diverse teachers. Staffing in the university system has improved and will continue to improve with the employment of minority and culturally diverse teachers.

For more information please contact:
Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction
125 South Webster
P.O. Box 7841
Madison, WI 53707
Lond Rodman
608/266-1879

Guest Commentary

New Strategies Are Needed To Produce Minority Teachers

by Barbara J. Holmes, Education Commission of the States (ECS)

A cycle has developed over the past 30 years wherein fewer and fewer minority students have been taught by minority teachers. Three consequences are especially grave. Too many minority youngsters do not have sufficient academic preparation to enter college or find gainful employment; their aspirations are limited by those who do not acknowledge the capacity of minority students to learn or to value knowledge. Secondly, their cultural knowledge of America as a nation and of their own ethnic and racial heritage has been delivered through eyes and voices that often have no empathy for cultural diversity. Finally, too many minorities are possessed by a growing skepticism that higher education will result in employment or a changed life.

Factors which have contributed to the shortage of minority teachers vary for the major underrepresented groups.

For African-Americans — Brown vs. Board of Education dismantled a system found separate and unequal. As a result, 38,000 black teachers lost their positions as teachers and administrators in 17 states from 1954 to 1965.

For Hispanics — There is little historical representation in public education in the field; as their populations have grown, underrepresentation grows.

For American Indians — There is a history of continuous underrepresentation.

For Asians — There is growing underrepresentation among newly arriving Southeast Asian groups; among Chinese and Japanese groups, no indication exists of significant interest in teaching as a career except at the university level.

Entry to higher education for minority groups grew from a policy of access which has not yielded significant increases in the proportions of minority youngsters graduating from four-year institutions. During the 1980s, a public outcry against the declining quality of education led to a widespread reform movement. With 46 states participating in the reform, the movement was characterized by a variety of attempts in the states to improve the quality of education by adding and/or upscaling requirements of various types: requirements for high school graduation, for entry to college, for entry to teacher education programs, and of course, for initial teacher certification.

An unintended consequence of the reform has been a reduction in the numbers of minority students eligible to enter higher education, to enter teacher preparation programs, and to be able to pass state tests for initial teacher certification. For example, over the past five years, 37,717 minority teachers have been denied entry to the teaching profession in 19 states; in other states, data are either uncollected or access to them is denied.

However, the benefit of access has been undermined by several significant obstacles not the least of which is lack of preparation to perform college-level work. Now other problems exist as more members of minority groups are becoming eligible to enter and complete undergraduate preparation: raised tuition and declining financial assistance in the form of grants and scholarships.

Over the past two years, the Education Commission of the States has investigated the shortage of minority teachers. Preliminary findings from the ECS study indicate:

- The minority teacher shortage is complex and multifaceted, affected by issues ranging from the diminished stature of teaching to the under-achievement of minority students in elementary grades.
- The complexity of the issue contributes to the tendency to opt for quick-fix, short-term solutions.
- The financial cuts across the country affect numerous disciplines, all levels of schooling from PreK-12 through college and university faculty.
- States, institutions of higher education, school districts, and schools all have different definitions and perceptions of the problem, and no area takes responsibility for it.
- States and institutions fail to collect standard data making it difficult to plot supply-and-demand trends, predict needs in the teaching force, or decide on actions to alleviate the shortage.

More than half of the states have plans and/or programs designed to recruit minority teachers. However, the shortage is so severe that results of strategies such as alternative certification and loan forgiveness programs are mixed with little evidence of an expanded pool.

What can states do to increase the number of minority teachers?

- Base policy decision and practices on best possible data and information collected and analyzed regularly. State plans need to connect all levels of schooling and include strategies for each level.
- Review current policy and practices to determine if they are actually yielding the desired results. The goal of integrated and comprehensive state plans should be to increase the pool of minority teachers in the state.
- State education policymakers, institutions and local districts and boards should be a part of the dialogue on increasing the supply of minority teachers.

Education, for any society, is a process through which people are melded into the traditions of their country, develop common understandings about values, attitudes and norms. Mutual respect is nurtured, and similarities, rather than differences, among groups are emphasized. Public education in America has been and must continue to be the source of shared experiences and common understandings. A shortage of minority teachers is therefore not just a game of matching numbers and trying out formulas. It is instead, a challenge and an opportunity for us all to make public education perform the job for which it is designed. ❐

Barbara Holmes is Director of Policy Studies at ECS. She is working on the shortage of minority teachers and is directing a new ECS initative entitled "All Children Can Learn."

Guest Commentary

One City's Plan

by Judith Isakson, Milwaukee Public Schools (MPS)

Recruitment and retention of minority teachers has been a pressing concern with the Milwaukee Public Schools for some time. Several collaborative efforts have been established in order to address this concern. These projects include the Teacher Intern Program, the Early Teaching Contract Program, and the Professional Development Schools. There are two issues to explore when examining these projects: what is the program and how has it been established and maintained. Both of these issues will be reviewed for each of these efforts.

All three of these efforts were proposed by the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee/Milwaukee Public Schools Consortium, composed of the dean and associate dean of the School of Education, as well as representatives from the chancellor's office, the superintendent and key assistant superintendents of the school district. In 1984-85, eight study groups were formed. Each was jointly chaired by a UWM professor and an MPS central administrator. Group membership included parents, teachers, and other key administrators and professors. The study groups were asked to research each of the issues and develop a set of recommendations with budgetary implications for each concept.

The Teacher Intern Program evolved from one such study group. The study group created a large number of models for internship situations in the school district. Following the budget process, sufficient monies existed to fund only two of the models. In 1987, a working committee identified two of the teacher models as most crucial to the district. The particular models offer one-half of the beginning teacher salary to interns during the semester of their student teaching. Priority is given to minority candidates, MPS employees, current paraprofessionals or aides, and to those seeking certification in areas of critical need. In the two and one-half years since its inception, 28 individuals have been employed as interns. MPS subsequently hired 18 interns as teachers including 13 minorities.

The success of these collaboratives, as with many such efforts, can be traced directly to the individuals involved. The staff development specialist in charge of the program has built relationships with the directors of student teaching at local colleges and universities. Meetings are held with the principal and cooperating teacher at each placement site. Interns are carefully evaluated for possible employment in the district. An emphasis on communication has made this collaborative effort a successful recruitment tool.

The second collaborative effort, the Early Teaching Contract Program, was also developed by a joint study group. The Early Teaching Contract Program creates hiring "slots" for individuals during their junior year at college. The program guarantees employment with the Milwaukee Public Schools for those selected students who successfully complete the program. Additional educational experiences in preparation for a career in urban education are provided to the participants. Once again, priority is given to minorities and those in areas of critical need. Five local colleges/universities provide participants for this program: University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, Cardinal Stritch College, Alverno College, Mount Mary College, and Marquette University. The Early Teaching Contract has involved 64 participants: 18 African-Americans, 3 Hispanics, 42 Caucasian, and 1 American Indian. It has proved to be an effective recruitment tool for bringing minorities into the teaching profession. The success of the Early Teaching Contract has been maintained due to the expertise of the program coordinators, sustaining their relationships with the various college/university representatives. Recruitment efforts have required strong relationships with the various institutions.

The third collaborative effort initiated with UW-Milwaukee and Milwaukee Public Schools is the Professional Development Schools concept. Four MPS schools were identified: Riverside University High School, Robert Fulton Middle School, Oliver Wendell Holmes Elementary School, and Robert LaFollette Elementary School. The identified schools exhibit a representative student population and have staffs willing to become involved in professional development. Each of the four schools has a university liaison. Each school is provided with extensive inservice on content identified by the school staff and cohorts of field experience students. Student teachers are placed in these schools. Efforts are made to involve prospective minority teachers in these cohort groups. The coordinators of this project are seeking foundation funding to develop teacher facilitators at these professional development schools.

The success of this collaborative has been largely due to the efforts of the university liaisons and their relationships with the individual schools. They have conducted inservice, facilitated the delivery of staff development by their university colleagues, and generally advised school staffs. In addition, the liaisons work with the field experience and student teachers placed at the sites. They have organized several Saturday conferences for professional development school teachers to dialogue issues related to education. Due to the efforts of University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee personnel, this program has been sustained largely in the individual schools.

These, then, represent three collaborative efforts between the Milwaukee Public Schools and area colleges/universities. The efforts are aimed specifically at recruitment and retention of minority teachers and have been maintained due to the personal efforts of staff from these institutions. ❐

Judith A. Isakson, Ed.D., is the director of the Professional Development and Leadership Training Academy, Milwaukee Public Schools, a position she has held for seven years. Dr. Isakson also serves as adjunct faculty for the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee's Department of Administrative Leadership.

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For information on programs designed to recruit and retain minority teachers in the region, contact the following:

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